

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Illinois</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Cook</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

2nd Congressional District - Congressman: Abner Mikva

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME  
COMMON  
**Isidore H. Heller House**  
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
**5132 South Woodlawn Avenue**  
CITY OR TOWN:  
**Chicago**  
STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17** COUNTY: **Cook** CODE: **031**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted
<input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY  
OWNER'S NAME:  
**Mr. & Mrs. George Watson**  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
**5132 South Woodlawn Avenue**  
CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
**Cook County Recorder of Deeds**  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Cook County Courthouse**  
CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS  
TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey**  
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Library of Congress**  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Washington**  
CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D. C.** CODE: **11**

STATE: **Illinois**

COUNTY: **Cook**

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

## 7. DESCRIPTION

(Check One)

CONDITION	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Heller House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for a narrow (then 50 feet x 175 feet, now 75 feet x 175 feet) lot in the Hyde Park area of Chicago, stands three storeys high with a basement. Its irregular rectangular shape is approximately 30 feet x 100 feet, with the narrow side facing east on Woodlawn Avenue. The 34 foot high building is entirely of balloon frame construction.

On the exterior, the Heller House is composed of a relatively large number of extremely well-integrated volumetric rectangles, each defined by crisp linear edges and in general, by smooth unadorned surfaces of vitrified brick.

The general feeling of the house is one of horizontality. Narrow Roman bricks cover the facades. The bricks are all buff colored up to the first limestone "string course", above which rows of grey bricks alternate with the rows of buff ones. All the horizontal joints between the bricks are white, whereas the vertical joints are the color of the bricks. Elongated hipped roofs with wide overhangs cover the second and third floors.

The main entrance to the house, on the south wall, is reached from a broad, two-step-high concrete stoop. The ornamental detail around the doorway is of light grey limestone, as are all the window sills, the lintels above the windows, and the water table. Octagonal columns flank either side of the doorway. Their capitals are decorated with foliate ornament, quite similar to the ornament designed by architect Louisa Sullivan, whom Wright had worked for from 1888 to 1893. These columns support a large panel that is divided into three sections and inscribed with bas-relief ornament in the form of quatrefoils. The upper portion of the doorway is surrounded by a broad, smooth, limestone band, trimmed at its edge with crisp geometric molding.

Leaded windows, filled with clear and stained glass, are located over the main interior staircase and on the north porch. The first floor of the east facade has four double-hung windows, with recessed limestone panels below. Second and third floor windows are mostly casement, of clear or multicolor designs. There is a bay window on the north, at the second floor. Bands of window groupings at the second story on the east and south sides of the house are topped by ornate block capitals.

At the third story, groupings of windows are set within arcades which rest on pairs of colonets topped by large capitals covered with elaborate ornament in the style of Sullivan. Also located between the arcades is a plaster frieze of sculptural figures, the latter executed by Richard Bock, an Oak Park sculptor who collaborated with Wright on many of his commissions. The third story, which is raised above the main eaves, capped by its own hipped roof, and smaller than the first two stories, defines the Heller House as belonging to a stylistic category of Wright's work that has been termed "Monitor."

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Illinois	
COUNTY	
Cook	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

No. 7 - description, cont.

The interior spaces and the decorative detail that articulates interior surfaces embrace Wright's new aesthetic based on elementary rectangular shapes. Walls were originally of rough sand finish, trimmed white oak. Oak strip flooring (though now covered in some areas) is located throughout. The interior color scheme was in sand beige. Lighting fixtures in the main rooms globes worked in brass and opalescent glass, have been removed.

The first floor contains a living room at the east front. Just west of the living room is the entrance, a reception room, and staircase. The dining room, pantry, and kitchen are in the rear of the house. On the second floor are five bedrooms and two baths. What were originally a billiard room and servants' quarters on the third story is now used as an apartment.

A walk extends along the south edge of the lot from Woodlawn to the entrance. It is wide with a planting strip and urn in the center. There is a low brick wall on the north and south sides. The remainder of the site is lawn, except for a garden, an eating terrace, a small patio, and a garage not designed by Wright and added after construction of the house. The most recent exterior changes to the house have been a new roof and new gutters.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Illinois	
COUNTY	
Cook	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

No. 8 - significance, cont.

far beyond the wall of the prairie house. All details were suited to the skill, equipment and materials at hand. The plans were practical and open. Outside and inside began to relate; a new style was evolving, a regional style and an American style, but one that was to have great influence in Europe. In 1911, Wright had the unusual honor of seeing a large, beautiful portfolio of his works published in Germany by the Wasmuth press. Included in this collection were renderings of the Heller House.

Wright was also the stylistic father of a new group of architects. By 1897, the Chicago Chapter in the history of skyscraper was almost over. The age of innovative commercial and industrial commissions was drawing to a close, and the age of innovative residential commissions was beginning. Frank Lloyd Wright was to become the spiritual leader of such insurgent midwest architect as Walter Burley Griffin, William Drummond, George Maher, Barry Byrne, William Purcell, George Elmslie and others.

The Heller House is significant because of its style, because of its architect and because of its location in the city of Chicago.

Hyde Park, where the Heller House, is located, was and is an area of substantial upper-class dwellings surrounded by beautiful wooded gardens. After annexation to the city in 1889, the establishment of the University of Chicago in 1892, and the Columbian Exposition the next year, Hyde Park and Kenwood, its neighbor to the north flourished.

Following the Depression and World War II, the area did begin to deteriorate. But neighborhood groups began to organize. Initial activities were modest in scope, concentrating on public safety and community services. It soon became apparent that only a comprehensive rehabilitation program, with government assistance, could stay the spreading blight. The 856-acre Hyde Park-Kenwood area has received national attention as one of the first and most successful conservation type urban renewal projects in the country. Execution of the project began in 1959; it continues today.

The Heller House stands within a half mile radius of other Wright houses. The Blossom and McArthur houses in Kenwood, of 1892, are among the very few remaining examples of Wright's architectural work while still with Sullivan. The Robie House in Hyde Park is the example, per excellence, of Wright's Prairie Style.

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian;  16th Century;  18th Century;  20th Century  
 15th Century;  17th Century;  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1897

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                                 |                                       |                                         |                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal             | <input type="checkbox"/> Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric            | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic               | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry     | <input type="checkbox"/> losophy        | _____                                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Human-  | _____                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature   | <input type="checkbox"/> itarian        | _____                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> Military     | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> Music        | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                              |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to Paul Sprague, Assistant Professor of Architectural History at the University of Chicago, the Heller House is of special significance because it is the finest of a group of buildings that initiate, in 1897, a transitional period in Frank Lloyd Wright's work, a period that would culminate, in 1900, in a style of architectural design that was entirely Wright's own.

The Heller House contains elements typical of 19th century eclecticism, yet prefigures Wright's new geometric aesthetic.

At a time in American cities, when residential districts showed a conglomeration of architectural styles, the Heller House included, to a limited extent, historically derived elements. This is evidence by the 3rd floor loggia as well as by the main South entrance flanked with columns and capped with quatrefoils. But with the house, Wright was abandoning the more picturesque and traditional styles that he had learned from his first master, Joseph Lyman Silsbee. In place of them Wright substituted the simple geometric rectilinear forms of Louis Sullivan.

Although these forms are ultimately derived from Sullivan, Wright has so synthesized and reworked them in this house that the result is a distinct and original design approaching Wright's later modern architectural style, commonly known as the predominantly residential "Prairie School" style. For example, the Heller House has a distinct horizontal emphasis. In addition, the two principal rooms, living room and dining room, assume the cruciform shape, which is slightly revealed in the outside of the house by short rectangular projections of wall corresponding to the arms of a cross, the shape Wright was to use so frequently in the Prairie House. Also, interior and exterior massing are the counterparts of one another, still one more hallmark of the style.

Despite conventional elements that can easily be traced to stylistic currents of the times, in his own day Frank Lloyd Wright was considered a revolutionary. This was proved throughout a very long career.

Wright was the father of the "Prairie School" style of architecture called this because it was designed to fit the expanse of middle-western terrain. In the Prairie house roofs were usually broad and extended

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ausgeführte Bauten und Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright.  
 German: The Wasmuth Press, 1911.

Bach, Ira. Chicago on Foot. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company,  
 1969, pp. 147, 149.

Farr, Finis. Frank Lloyd Wright. New York; Charles Scribner's  
 Sons, 1961, pp. 68-71.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	41	48	08"	87	35	37			
NE	41	48	08"	87	35	33			
SE	41	48	03"	87	35	33			
SW	41	48	03"	87	35	37			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **4.8 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Mrs. Susan Benjamin**

ORGANIZATION: **Commission on Chicago Hist. and Arch. Landmarks** DATE: **12/1/70**

STREET AND NUMBER: **320 N. Clark Street, Room 800**

CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

✓ 1. 1. 1. 1.

## 1. Name of Site:

CommonHistoric Heller House

## 2. Location:

Street and Number 5132 S. Woodlawn (just So. Township  
of Hyde Park)SectionCity or Town Chicago Zip Code Range1/2 SectionCounty Cook3. Classification:

Category (check one)

Integrity (check one)

 District  Building  
 Site  Structure Altered  Unaltered  
 Moved  Original  
Site4. Ownership:

Status (check one)

 Private  
 Public Occupied  
 Unoccupied  
 Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

 Yes  Restricted  Unrestricted  No

Present Use (check one or more)

 Agricultural  Industrial  Religious  
 Commercial  Military  Scientific  
 Educational  Museum  Transportation  
 Entertainment  Park  Other  
 Government  Private Residence5. Ownership of Property:Owner's NamePhone NumberStreet and NumberCity or TownStateCountyZip Code6. Description: Prairie School Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  
 Ruins  Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway?

 Yes ?  No

ARCHITECTURE

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- |                                                     |                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Pre-Columbian)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Post-Columbian to 1673)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French Influence           | (1673-1780)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Frontier          | (1780-1818)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early             | (1818-1850)                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle | (1850-1900)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late              | (1900-present)                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Famous People   | (give names & dates) F.L. Wright |

8. Specific Date: 1897

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- |                                                    |                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture    |                                              |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)

Use additional sheets if necessary. F.L. Wright early design, eclectic yet modern.  
National Register. Chicago Landmarks Comm. Landmar

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 6/23/75  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street and Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

Various



<input type="checkbox"/>	Survey
<input type="checkbox"/>	Archaeology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	History

Name of Site:  
Isadore H. Heller House

**Isadore H. Heller House**

Historic

Location of site:  
Street and Number

**5132 South Woodlawn Avenue**

Township

3 East

City or town

**Chicago**

Zip Code

**60615**

County

Cook

State

**Cook**

Classification  
Category

District  
 Site

Building  
 Structure

Integrity

Check one

Altered

Destroyed

Location

Check one

Moved

Original site

Condition

Status

Inhabited  
 Vacant

Occupied  
 Unoccupied

Abandoned  
 Work in progress

Use in the past

Yes

Restricted

Unrestricted

Yes

Present Use Check one or more

Agricultural  
 Commercial  
 Educational  
 Entertainment  
 Government

Industrial  
 Military  
 Museum  
 Park  
 Private residence

Religious  
 Residential  
 Transportation  
 Other (specify)

Name of property:

Name & address

**Mr. & Mrs. George Watson**

Phone number

Street and number

**5132 South Woodlawn Avenue**

City or town

**Chicago**

State

**Illinois**

County

**Cook**

Zip

**60615**

6. Descriptions:  
Conditions:

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation under way?     Yes     No  
If yes, give a brief description on the back of this page.

7. Historical themes: (check one or more of the following)

<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological site	(pre-Columbian)
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological site	(post-Columbian to 1673)
<input type="checkbox"/> French influence	(1673-1780)
<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois frontier	(1780-1818)
<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois early	(1818-1850)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois middle	(1850-1900)
<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois late	(1900-present)
<input type="checkbox"/> Famous people	(give names and dates)

8. Specific date of site:

Areas of significance: (check one or more)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (Pre-historic)	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)

Brief statement of significance: (Include all names and dates.)  
Use back of page and additional sheets if necessary.

9. Form prepared by

Name and Title: Mrs. Susan Benjamin    Date: 12-1-70  
Organization: Commission on Chicago Historical & Architectural Landmarks  
Street and Number: 320 North Clark Street, Room 800  
City or Town: Chicago    County: Cook    Zip Code: 60610  
Phone Number:

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site.

When filling out the survey form, please list according to the following example any published references to the site for which the form is being completed.

If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly reduce the surveyor's task.

Bibliography Form.

Scottson, Robert B., Of Whales and Men, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1974.

Description:

The Heller House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright for a narrow (then 50 feet x 175 feet, now 75 feet x 175 feet) lot in the Hyde Park area of Chicago, stands three stories high with a basement. Its irregular rectangular shape is approximately 30 feet x 100 feet, with the narrow side facing east on Woodlawn Avenue. The thirty-four foot high building is entirely of balloon frame construction.

On the exterior, the Heller House is composed of a relatively large number of extremely well-integrated volumetric rectangles, each defined by crisp linear edges and in general, by smooth unadorned surfaces of vitrified brick.

The general feeling of the house is one of horizontality. Narrow Roman bricks cover the facades. The bricks are all buff colored up to the first limestone "string course", above which rows of grey bricks alternate with the rows of buff ones. All the horizontal joints between the bricks are white, whereas the vertical joints are the color of the bricks. Elongated hipped roofs with wide overhangs cover the second and third floors.

The main entrance to the house, on the south wall, is reached from a broad, two-step-high concrete stoop. The ornamental detail around the doorway is of light grey limestone, as are all the window sills, the lintels above the windows, and the water table. Octagonal columns flank either side of the doorway. Their capitals are decorated with foliate ornament, quite similar to the ornament designed by architect Louis Sullivan, whom Wright had worked for from 1888 to 1893. These columns support a large panel that is divided into three sections and inscribed with bas-relief ornament in the form of quatrefoils. The upper portion of the doorway is surrounded by a broad, smooth limestone band, trimmed at its edge with crisp geometric molding.

Loaded windows, filled with clear and stained glass, are located over the main interior staircase and on the north porch. The first floor of the east facade has four double-hung windows, with recessed limestone panels below. Second and third floor windows are mostly casement, of clear or multicolor designs. There is a bay window on the north, at the second floor. Bands of window groupings at the second story on the east and south sides of the house are topped by ornate block capitals.

At the third story, groupings of windows are set within arcades which rest on pairs of corbelles topped by large capitals covered with elaborate ornament in the style of Sullivan. Also located between the arcades is a plaster frieze of sculptural figures, the latter executed by Richard Beck, an Oak Park sculptor who collaborated with Wright on many of his commissions. The third story, which is raised above the main eaves, capped by its own hipped roof, and smaller than the first two stories, defines the Heller House as belonging to a stylistic category of Wright's work that has been termed "Monitor."

The interior spaces and the decorative detail that articulates interior surfaces embrace Wright's new aesthetic based on elementary rectangular shapes. Walls were originally of rough sand finish, trimmed in white oak. Oak strip flooring (though now covered in some areas) is located throughout. The interior color scheme was in sand beige. Lighting fixtures in the main rooms, globes worked in brass and opalescent glass, have been removed.

The first floor contains a living room at the east front. Just west of the living room is the entrance, a reception room, the staircase. The dining room, pantry, and kitchen are in the rear of the house. On the second floor are five bedrooms and two baths. What were originally a billiard room and servants' quarters on the third story is now used as an apartment.

### Description, cont.

A walk extends along the south edge of the lot from Woodlawn to the entrance. It is wide with a planting strip and lawn in the center. There is a low brick wall on the north and south sides. The remainder of the site is lawn, except for a garden, an eating terrace, a small patio, and a garage not designed by Wright and added after construction of the house. The most recent exterior changes to the house have been a new roof and new gutters.

### Significance:

According to Paul Sprague, Assistant Professor of Architectural History at the University of Chicago, the Heller House is of special significance because it is the finest of a group of buildings that initiate, in 1897, a transitional period in Frank Lloyd Wright's work, a period that would culminate, in 1900, in a style of architectural design that was entirely Wright's own.

The Heller House contains elements typical of 19th century eclecticism, yet prefigures Wright's new geometric aesthetic.

At a time in American cities, when residential districts showed a conglomeration of architectural styles, the Heller House included, to a limited extent, historically derived elements. This is evidenced by the third-floor loggia as well as by the main South entrance flanked with columns and capped with quatrefoils. But the house, Wright was abandoning the most picturesque and traditional styles that he had learned from his first master, Joseph Lyman Silsbee. In place of them Wright substituted the simple geometric rectilinear forms of Louis Sullivan.

Although these forms are ultimately derived from Sullivan, Wright has so synthesized and reworked them in this house that the result is a distinct and original design approaching Wright's later modern architectural style, commonly known as the predominantly residential "Prairie School" style. For example, the Heller House has a distinct horizontal emphasis. In addition, the two principal rooms, living room and dining room, assume the cruciform shape, which is slightly revealed on the outside of the house by short rectangular projections of wall corresponding to the arms of a cross, the shape Wright was to use so frequently in the Prairie house. Also, interior and exterior massing are the counterparts of one another, still one more hallmark of the style.

Despite conventional elements that can easily be traced to stylistic currents of the times, in his own day Frank Lloyd Wright was considered a revolutionary. This was proved throughout a very long career.

Wright was the father of the "Prairie School" style of architecture, called this because it was designed to fit the expanse of middle-western terrain. In the Prairie house roofs were usually broad and extended far beyond the wall of the prairie house. All details were suited to the skill, equipment and materials at hand. The plans were practical and open. Outside and inside began to relate; a new style was evolving, a regional style and an American style, but one that was to have great influence in Europe. In 1911, Wright had the unusual honor of seeing a large, beautiful portfolio of his works published in Germany by the Wasmuth press. Included in this collection were renderings of the Heller House.

### Significance, cont.

Wright was also the stylistic father of a new group of architects. By 1897, the Chicago chapter in the history of the skyscraper was almost over. The age of innovative commercial and industrial commissions was drawing to a close, and the age of innovative residential commissions was beginning. Frank Lloyd Wright was to become the spiritual leader of such insurgent midwest architects as Walter Burling Griffin, William Drummond, George Maher, Barry Byrne, William Purcell, George Elmslie and others.

The Heller House is significant because of its style, because of its architect and because of its location in the City of Chicago.

Hyde Park, where the Heller House is located, was and is an area of substantial upper-class dwellings surrounded by beautiful wooded gardens. After annexation to the City in 1889, the establishment of the University of Chicago in 1892, and the Columbian Exposition the next year, Hyde Park and Kenwood, its neighbor to the north, flourished.

Following the Depression and World War II, the area did begin to deteriorate. But neighborhood groups began to organize. Initial activities were modest in scope, concentrating on public safety and community services. It soon became apparent that only a comprehensive rehabilitation program, with government assistance, could stay the spreading blight. The 856-acre Hyde Park-Kenwood area has received national attention as one of the first and most successful conservation type urban renewal projects in the country. Execution of the project began in 1959; it continues today.

The Heller House stands within a half-mile radius of other Wright houses. The Blosson and McArthur houses in Kenwood, of 1892, are among the very few remaining examples of Wright's architectural work while still with Sullivan. The Robie House in Hyde Park is the example, par excellence, of Wright's Prairie style.

### Bibliographical References:

"Heller House, Woodlawn Avenue, Frank Lloyd Wright Architect." Architectural Review Vol. VII, (June, 1900) pl. XXXV fol. p. 76.

Historic American Buildings Survey Ill-1046  
Historic and structural information on the house. Plans. Photos.

Historic American Buildings Survey  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
801-19th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20006

Hitchcock, Henry Russell. In the Nature of Materials. The Buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright, 1887-1941. New York: Duell Sloan and Pearce, 1942. pp. 23-35, illus 43, Plan 44.

Bibliographical References, cont.

- Ausgeführte Bauten and Entwürfe von Frank Lloyd Wright. German: The Wasmuth Press, 1911.
- Bach, Ira. Chicago on Foot. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1969. pp. 147, 149.
- Farr, Finis. Frank Lloyd Wright. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961. pp. 68-71.
- Kaufmann, Edgar, Ed. The Rise of an American Architecture, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970. Scully, Vincent. "American Houses: Thomas Jefferson to Frank Lloyd Wright." pp. 163, 186-7.
- Manson, Grant. Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910, The First Golden Age. New York: The Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1958. pp. 68, 75-78.
- Siegel, Arthur. Chicago's Famous Buildings. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969. pp. 110-11.
- Spencer, Robert C., Jr. The Work of Frank Lloyd Wright from 1893 to 1900. Pales Park: Prairie School Press reissue, 1966. (June, 1900, issue of the Architectural Review.
- Wade, Richard and Mayer, Harold M. Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969. pp. 90, 172-3, 388, 390, 392, 394, 398, 402, 404.

